

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 SAJ-01 DRC-01 /102 W
----- 008102

R 021453Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0009

INFO AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

USNAVCOMMSTA LONDON DERRY

AMCONSUL BELFAST

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, U. K. (N. I.)

SUBJECT: ASSEMBLY BYE-ELECTION SET FOR JUNE 6

FOLLOWING TRANSMITTED BY CONSULATE GENERAL BELFAST:

BEGIN SUMMARY NI SECSTATE HAS SET ASSEMBLY BYE-ELECTION
IN ANTRIM NORTH FOR JUNE 6, WITH NOMINATIONS DUE MAY 20.
THERE WAS BIG SWING TO LOYALISTS BETWEEN JUNE 1973
ASSEMBLY ELECTION AND FEBRUARY 1974 IMPERIAL GENERAL
ELECTION. BYE-ELECTION NOW UNDERLINES HMG'S REFUSAL TO
HOLD EARLY ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS, AND WITHOUT PAISLEY
HEADING TICKET LOYALIST VICTORY COULD WELL BE SMALLER
THAN IN FEBRUARY. GOOD PRO-EXECUTIVE SHOWING DEPENDS
ON COOPERATION IN SECOND PREFERENCES AMONG PRO-EXECUTIVE
PARTIES. ATTITUDE OF DIVIDED TRADITIONAL UNIONIST PARTY
VOTE IS CRUCIAL. END SUMMARY

1. NORTHERN IRELAND SECRETARY OF STATE HAS SET JUNE 6
AS DATE FOR ASSEMBLY BYE-ELECTION TO FILL ANTRIM NORTH
SEAT VACATED LAST JULY 15 BY DEATH OF (FAULKNER)
UNIONIST RICHARD MCCARTHY. FIRST TO BE HELD UNDER 1973
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CONSTITUTION ACT, BYE-ELECTION WILL BE CONDUCTED ON

BASIS OF PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION WITH SINGLE
TRANSFERABLE VOTE (PR/STV).

2. THERE WAS BIG SWING TO LOYALISTS IN ANTRIM NORTH
BETWEEN JUNE 1973 ASSEMBLY ELECTION AND FEBRUARY 1974

"IMPERIAL" GENERAL ELECTION:

JUNE 1973 ASSEMBLY ELECTION -- ELECTORATE 99,635,

VALID VOTES 71,249 (71.3 PER CENT)

1ST PREFERENCE VOTES

(A) 3 DEMOCRATIC UNIONIST	21,698
3 VANGUARD UNIONIST	9,093
TOTAL LOYALIST	30,791

2 NI LABOUR	2,335
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(B) 4 (FAULKNER) UNIONIST	20,643
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4 ALLIANCE	6,900
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2 NI LABOUR	2,335
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2 SDLP	10,580
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TOTAL PRO-CONSTITUTION	40,458
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FEBRUARY 1974 IMPERIAL ELECTION -- ELECTORATE

104,168, VALID VOTES 64,989 (62.4 PER CENT)

VOTES

(A) IAN PAISLEY (UNITED UNIONIST/ DEMOCRATIC UNIONIST)	41,282
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(B) T.E. UTLEY (PRO-ASSEMBLY UNIONIST)	13,651
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MARY MCALISTER (SDLP)	10,056
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TOTAL PRO-SUNNINGDALE	23,707
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3. LOYALISTS HAVE ALL ALONG BEEN CALLING FOR BYE-
ELECTION, EXPECTING TO WIN IT IN ORDER TO BOOST THEIR
NUMBERS IN ASSEMBLY AND SHOW THAT EXECUTIVE WAS NOT
BROADLY ACCEPTABLE. IN PAST BOTH WHITELAW AND PYM
DECLINED TO SET DATE FOR BYE-ELECTION, PRESUMABLY
BECAUSE THEY SHARED LOYALIST ASSESSMENT OF LIKELY
OUTCOME. BUT BYE-ELECTION NOW SERVES HMG'S PURPOSES BY

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0010
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INDICATING NO NEW ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS ARE IN CARDS.
LOYALIST VICTORY IS GENERALLY EXPECTED, BUT WITHOUT IAN
PAISLEY TO HEAD TICKET MARGIN COULD WELL DIMINISH FROM
FEBRUARY, DOING LITTLE FURTHER HARM TO EXECUTIVE AND
ENABLING IT TO CLAIM MORAL VICTORY OF SORTS.

4. ALTHOUGH PR/STV SYSTEM ENCOURAGES SECOND PREFERENCE
DEALS RATHER THAN AGREEMENT ON SINGLE CANDIDATE,
LOYALISTS MAY WELL RUN SINGLE CANDIDATE, PROBABLY A
DEMOCRATIC UNIONIST, IN LINE WITH MANDATE OF THEIR
RECENT PORTRUSH CONFERENCE. GOOD SHOWING FOR EXECUTIVE
REQUIRES THAT EXECUTIVE PARTIES PERSUADE SUPPORTERS TO
CAST SECOND PREFERENCE VOTE FOR ONE ANOTHER'S
CANDIDATES.

5. BIG QUESTION MARK IS UNIONIST VOTE. UNIONIST
CONSTITUENCY ASSOCIATION NOMINATED PRO-FAULKNER
CANDIDATES IN ASSEMBLY ELECTION AND AGAIN IN IMPERIAL
ELECTION, BUT MANY 1973 UNIONIST VOTERS EITHER BACKED
PAISLEY OR ABSTAINED IN FEBRUARY. EARLIER THIS YEAR
PRO-FAULKNER UNIONIST PROSPECTIVE ASSEMBLY CANDIDATE
RESIGNED BECAUSE OF IMPOSSIBILITY OF SELLING
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SUNNINGDALE TO PEOPLE EVEN MORE MODERATE THAN HIMSELF.
CONSTITUENCY ASSOCIATION IS NOW DIVIDED BETWEEN BACKERS
OF HARRY WEST AND DEMORALIZED FAULKNERITES; BUT PRO-
ASSEMBLY UNIONIST SPOKESMAN ASSURED US THERE WILL BE
PRO-ASSEMBLY UNIONIST CANDIDATE EITHER INSIDE OR
OUTSIDE CONSTITUENCY ASSOCIATION. ON OTHER HAND,
EDUCATION MINISTER BASIL MCIVOR TOLD US PRO-ASSEMBLY
UNIONIST LEADERSHIP IS HAVING TROUBLE ESTABLISHING GOOD
CONSTITUENCY ORGANIZATION AMIDST DEBRIS OF DEFEAT IN
ANTRIM NORTH, AND IS THEREFORE RELUCTANT TO RUIN
ELECTORAL DEBUT OF ITS MOST PROMISING CANDIDATE, PRO-

ASSEMBLY YOUNG UNIONIST LEADER DR. IRIS AGNEW.

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